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P A P E R S.



Heb. x. 26–27.

BY REV. HOWARD CROSBY.

Ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν, μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας, οὐκέτι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπολείπεται θυσία, φοβερὰ δέ τις ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως, καὶ πυρὸς ζῆλος ἐσθίειν μέλλοντος τοὺς ὑπεναντίους. The last clause of this passage is that to which I especially desire to call attention. In the King James' version "judgment" and "indignation" are made co-ordinate, when the "fearful looking for" and the "indignation" are the co-ordinates. This is obviated in the Revision by putting a comma after judgment and the indefinite article before the next subject. The King James' version reads, "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." The Revision has "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire." The Revision has thus not only separated the subjects correctly, but has caused to disappear the awkward phrase, "looking for of judgment," which was indeed *fearful*. I wish the Revision had also deleted the word "certain," which to the English reader is apt to be regarded as a translation of *βέβαια* rather than *τις* — in such a connection as this.

But let us go a little farther in our criticism. Is "fierceness" a proper translation of *ζῆλος*? Jealous eagerness is the common idea of the word, whether the jealousy be an honest emulation or a selfish desire. In John ii. 17, we have "the *zeal* of thine house hath eaten me up." In Acts v. 7, "they were filled with *indignation*" ("jealousy" in the Revision). In Acts xiii. 45, "they were filled with *envy*" (again "jealousy" in the Revision). In Rom. x. 2, "they have a *zeal* of God." So the Revision renders it "jealousy" in 1 Cor. iii. 3; Rom. xiii. 13; 2 Cor. xi. 2, and xii. 20; Gal. v. 20; Jas. iii. 14, 16; and "zeal" in every other case. These translations of "zeal" and "jealousy" agree with the use of the word in classic Greek as in

Plato and Aristotle, the tragic writers also using it for the *object* of zeal and jealousy.

Now the use of the English "fierceness" for ζῆλος in this passage is evidently objective, having regard to the effect of the fire on the object, while "zeal" and "jealousy" are subjective dispositions of the mind. The fierceness of the fire is certainly used by the Revision for the consuming property of the fire and not for any sentiment on the part of the fire toward its victim, — not for any fierceness of its zeal. And yet we claim that this personification of fire is just what is intended here. If "fierceness" is to be used, then it is the fierceness of a tiger or lion with a will to devour and not the fierceness of a flame which has no will, but whose fierceness is spoken of objectively to the person attacked. The zeal of the fire to grasp its prey and devour it is represented in the word. And so in the co-ordinate clause "the fearful expectation of judgment," the expectation is not that of the man. He expects nothing of the kind. As the 73d Psalm describes him, he is perfectly composed. He has no bands even in his death. Apostates are not expecting judgment, but they have blinded their vision so that they cannot see the coming doom. The "expectation" in this clause is that of the *judgment*. Judgment is personified,¹ just as the fire is personified. Judgment is looking for the criminal to punish him. It is a fearful thing, this watch of judgment to condemn the soul.

We thus have two contrasted pictures. On one side is the sacrifice for sins burning on the altar, and on the other is stern judgment waiting to strike, and the penal fire (not the altar's fire) crouching like a tiger to spring upon its victim.

Hence we would paraphrase the passage in this way — "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but Justice with her formidable purpose and the Fire eager to devour its victim."

¹ As in 2 Pet. ii. 3. "Whose judgment lingereth not" — οἷς τὸ κρίμα οὐκ ἄργεῖ.